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NICARAGUA/
CIA TARGETS

KURTIS: Disclosure of the harbor minings is behind the latest controversy over President Reagan's Central America policy, but direct CIA involvement in Nicaragua has not been limited to the placement of mines. Robert Schakne reports.

SCHAKNE: According to intelligence sources, the CIA directly recruited and dispatched frogmen to blow up Nicaragua's principal oil center a full three months before it started mining Nicaragua's harbors. The CIA's involvement was first reported by CBS News last October. The sources say the CIA sent a mother ship to waters off the port of Corinto last Oct. 10 and from it, sent high-speed small boats, so-called cigarette boats, to shore carrying Honduran underwater demolition experts. These frogmen then set the charges that blew up the oil storage tanks, burning over 3 million gallons of fuel. Capitol Hill sources say the Senate Intelligence Committee was never told of the direct CIA involvement in the Corinto raid, instead, was told that the Nicaraguan rebels, the so-called contras, had recruited the frogmen and organized the raid. The CIA's direct role in Central America has set off congressional protest, but at the White House today, President Reagan told members of the National Hispanic Conference his patience with Congress was wearing thin. RONALD REAGAN: Debate on this issue has strayed too far from reality. If we mean to oppose communist aggression, then we cannot throw every possible roadblock in the way of helping our peace-loving friends defend themselves.

SCHAKNE: Intelligence sources in Washington have told CBS News that the CIA not only authorized and cleared the sea-launched attacks, but also selected the targets for the air attacks in Managua by light planes last September. Robert Schakne, CBS News, Washington.